

Cell phone work is boost to BPA

The boom in cellular telephones has led to new telephone area codes in Oregon and Washington. But it has also brought some new business and revenue to BPA in recent years.

Cell phones and other wireless systems need tall antennas to relay messages. That means phone companies must locate sites to build towers and install their equipment. In the Pacific Northwest, it means construction in forests, on mountains, in remote areas or in sensitive environmental terrain.

And that's exactly where BPA comes in. BPA's 15,000-mile transmission grid crisscrosses much of the Northwest. Its high voltage line towers and substation microwave towers are ready-made sites for cell phone antennas.

BPA has been installing antennas on its system for the past few years. Line crews in the Puget Sound area have become expert at the work. Telephone and cell companies contract with BPA for the work and then pay to lease the antenna sites.

Lineman foreman Bob Sweet at Snohomish says transmission line maintenance crews there and at Covington have been very busy this fall putting up new antennas. He said the two districts have close to 70 operating sites between them.

"BPA employees do all the installation work from the ground to the top of our towers," Sweet says. "We also do all the maintenance on any antenna, cable or other cell site components attached to BPA towers. The phone companies maintain their

electronic equipment on the ground."

Sweet says that BPA can install several antennas on a single tower – so long as they are designed for safety to the power system. "Many of our towers have multiple antennas," he says. "For instance, we have a Bell



Antenna antics – These Snohomish linemen aren't being funny but their work high on BPA transmission towers does draw attention. Mike Deason, Curt Martin, Garry Oberst, Tom Marr and working foreman Steve Scott are installing cell phone antennas on the BPA grid near Puget Sound.

Photos by Bob Sweet

South antenna on the top of our Snohomish microwave tower. Below it is a Voicestream antenna, and below Voicestream is a US West antenna at the 80-foot level."

Sweet says the TLM workers are proud of their work outside of the regular power grid maintenance. "It has blossomed into a great source of revenue for BPA," he says. "And it also helps others in several ways. The wireless companies don't have to struggle to find sites to build in remote areas. Many communities aren't faced with unsightly towers. And fewer new construction sites will be built that disturb the environment." ◀

A BPA team from the Ross Complex is helping the Army Corps of Engineers refurbish transformers at Lower Monumental Dam on the Snake River. Three electricians – Russ May, Jim Potts and Mario Perez – have been working at the dam 30 miles northeast of Pasco, Wash., since early August.

This is the first time a BPA crew has worked with a Corps crew on a Corps project. A BPA crane and operator have joined the electricians for work on the larger transformers.

The project is expected to take four months, said Ross electrician foreman Tom Huffman. Huffman put together a \$600,000 bid for the work



Lower Monumental work – A BPA electrical crew helps the Army Corps of Engineers refurbish its transformer banks at the Snake River dam east of Pasco, Wash. (Above) Foreman Russ May hands equipment to Jim Potts who's working inside a transformer. Electricians Mario Perez and Potts (right) work around radiators on a transformer.

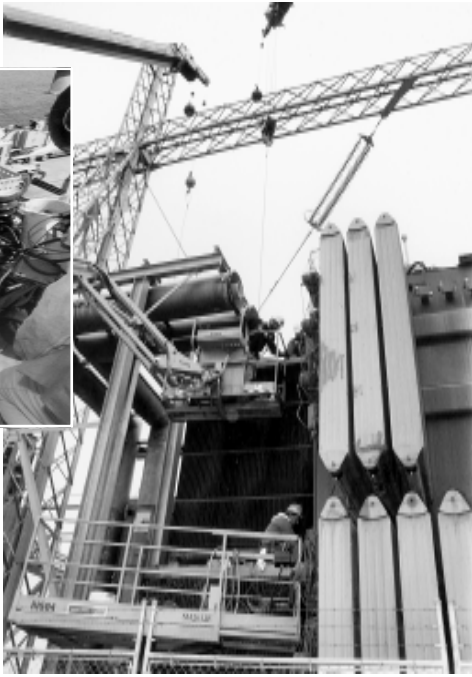
Photos by Bob Heims

Crew helps refurbish Snake River project

after the Corps approached BPA on it. He said BPA's electricians are working many 12-hour days and seven days a week to get the job done by the end of November.

Lower Monumental has eight transformers in two banks. Generators can't run while people work on the transformers. The refurbishing will clean transformers and replace parts that have worn down over the years. The work will raise the efficiency of the project when it's done.

May said his crew "is doing a really awesome job" at Lower Monumental. The Corps said it is pleased with the work. BPA's experience at Lower Monumental could lead to similar project in the future. ◀



Action fits CFC drive to a tee

Managers at Portland and Vancouver are putting more action into this year's Combined Federal Charities campaign. And metro area charities stand to gain some action in the form of volunteer service time.

Senior Vice President Steve Wright issued a challenge from his Corporate team. And the four other major work groups took up the challenge. The front office and general counsel combined. The Power Business Line, Transmission Business Line and Shared Services complete the field.

The challenge is to have the highest percent increase in people who sign up for CFC over last year. Obviously, only one major group will come out on top. So what happens to those that finish second, third, fourth and last? The managers of those work groups will have the opportunity to put in some time for a charity in the area.

Each group determines who and how many of its managers are on the carpet. The charities must be in CFC or otherwise be certified non-profit groups. Managers from the major business group that finishes second in the challenge will work one hour for the charity they choose. Those in the group that comes in third will work two hours for a charity. Managers in the fourth and fifth place

groups will volunteer three and four hours, respectively.

Wright said the CFC challenge is a real winner for everyone. "The CFC and charities win, and that's the way it should be," he said. "Managers from four out of five BPA business groups won't win the challenge," he said, "but they will gain something and help the community by giving their time for good causes."

Wright said, "The BPA challenge for this year's drive fits the CFC theme to a tee – Federal Employees Doing and Sharing." ◀

(Editor's note: All BPA employees get CFC notices and material from BPA. Portland and Vancouver are part of the nine-county Columbia area of Ore. and Wash. BPA folks elsewhere come under other CFC areas.)



A winning face? – You bet! And Judy Polenske was happy about her win for CFC. For the whole story of what the Seattle office did for this year's Combined Federal Campaign, see page 2.

Photo by Mark Freckleton



Senior VP Steve Wright donned cleaning and repair tools for the latest all-employee meeting. He issued a charity work challenge to managers of BPA work groups.

Photo by Sherry Lind

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